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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2269  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 2392

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 000127

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ISN/CPI FOR FELIPE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/18/2017  
TAGS: [KNNP](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [SN](#)  
SUBJECT: DELIVERED: REQUEST TO CONTINUE DETAINING STEEL  
PLATES SHIPMENT

REF: A. STATE 4238  
[1](#)B. SINGAPORE 23  
[1](#)C. STUMPF-REED E-MAIL 04 JAN 2007

Classified By: E/P Counselor Ike Reed for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (S/NF) E/P Counselor and Econoff on January 18 delivered ref A demarche to MFA's International Organizations Director Tan Yee Woan and Assistant Director Ong Soo Chuan, urging that Singapore continue detaining the steel plates shipment rather than requiring the shipper to return it to China (ref B). Tan could not confirm the steel plates were still in Singapore but pledged to study our non-paper and confer again with relevant agencies to see whether Singapore could find a legal basis to continue detaining the shipment if they were. At the same time, she expressed confidence that GOS lawyers had thoroughly studied the case in an effort to find a defensible basis to detain the shipment. When they did not, the GOS had decided the best alternative was to return the shipment to China, rather than allow it to go to its intended destination. Tan offered to arrange a meeting with MFA lawyers so they could explain the reasoning behind their original determination.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) Tan noted that this case presented a dilemma the GOS is facing with increasing regularity. The GOS often lacks sufficient direct evidence to justify the seizure of suspect shipments, and actions based on intelligence data are difficult to defend in court because of the need to protect sources. For this reason, Tan expressed concern that future requests of a similar nature could prove problematic. She urged us to put pressure on source countries (in this case, China) to prevent shipments of concern in the first place rather than depending solely on transshipment ports to intercept them.

#### COUNTERPROLIFERATION DIALOGUE

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[1](#)3. (SBU) Ong took the opportunity to inform us that early February would no longer work for Singapore as a time to hold the next round of our bilateral counter proliferation dialogue (ref C). Ong suggested as a possible alternative holding the dialogue in June, just prior to the PSI exercise in Newport, Rhode Island.  
FERGIN